Negroes, Courses on, in Schools, etc.—1935.

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By CARTER G. WOODSON

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In thus presenting the situation this school authority has expressed the truth. When schools decide to introduce the study of the Negro they face the difficulty of finding suitable books. During last generation the Associated Publishers and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (Washington, D. C.) have endeavored to supply such books and pictures, but the few persons directing these agencies cannot supply all these needs. A larger number of workers must enter upon this task of finding the facts to be offered in such courses and the proper method of presentation.

A Great Opportunity

Here, then, is a great opportunity for the scholars and teachers of the race. What we have written on the Negro so far has been mainly polemic—books and dissertations which show how to solve the race problem which we have not yet solved because these very persons treat the symptoms of this social disease rather than the disease itself. A Negro is lynched, and we immediately publish a resolution or produce a pamphlet or book in protest; but this does not stop lynching. The Negro is lynched because nobody respects him. The Negro does not respect himself, and the white man has the utmost contempt for him. We get at the root of things, however, when we teach the Negro out of his own background how to respect himself and constrain the white man to respect the Negro because of his creditable past. Slowly this is being done, and only in such fashion can things of an enduring value be acomplished.

Schools, clubs and study groups desiring to extend their efforts in this sphere are endeavoring especially to secure literature for children. Unfortunately, however, we have left the Negro child without anything to encourage him along the way.

At the very cradle he starts with a juvenile literature in which he sees his race as an outcast playing no part in the wide world which gradually unfolds itself to him. As the child grows up parents find it difficult to explain the numerous differences and exceptions and at the same time prevent the child from hating himself and the race to which he belongs.

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We Are Learning

Slowly, however, we are all learning. Some of the colleges and universities are changing their attitudes in gradually taking up more and more of the history—in trying to account for things as we find them among Negroes of today, for only in the light of such experiences can we live unto a better day.

Students attending a few of our colleges have a chance to make a beginning in this direction; and two or three large summer schools now try to supply this need among teachers who had no such opportunity when they attended school.